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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 26, 2010

Summary: Coverage of the Trilateral Summit in Istanbul dominated media on Tuesday morning. Newspapers focused on President Zardari's statement that the Government of Pakistan is willing to talk to Taliban who are "reconcilable" and "want to give up their way of life." Several dailies reported General McChrystal's hope that the troop surge would weaken the Taliban enough to force its leaders to accept a peace deal, and General Petraeus' statement that any Afghan can play a role if they focus on the future, and not the past. "Daily Times" reported that Senator Lieberman and Ambassador Haqqani will announce on Wednesday Pakistan's exemption from additional airport screening measures. Urdu dailies "Express," and "Islam," reported that the U.S. Embassy spokesman denied reports that Blackwater has trained the Pakistani Prime Minister's security personnel. The papers also corrected a story (published on 1/25) that claimed the U.S. Mission imported 3000 bullet-proof vests for its employees. All major dailies highlighted reports that Pakistan ruled out global negotiations to ban the future production of nuclear material given the "clear and present danger" from a nuclear-armed India. Both electronic and print media also reported execution of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's notorious henchman "Chemical Ali". Reconciliation with the Taliban was also the subject of several editorials today that focused on U.S. willingness to talk to Afghan Taliban, while pressing Pakistan to open new military fronts against the Pakistani Taliban. The editorials questioned what effects a reconciliation policy would have on Pakistani security. Headlines include: "Turnaround on Taliban" ("The Nation"), "NATO Commander's Suggestion of Talks with the Taliban: This Is the Best Time to Withdraw U.S Troops from the Region" ("Nawa-i-Waqt"); and "Could the Taliban Reconcile with Kabul?" ("The News"). End Summary.

#### TOP STORIES

News Story: Istanbul Summit Reiterates Pledge To Counter Terror - "The News" (01/26)

"President Asif Ali Zardari said Monday the Pakistan government would be willing to talk to the people who want to give up their way of life and are reconcilable. President Zardari was answering questions at a joint news conference with Presidents Abdullah Gul of Turkey and Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan on the conclusion of 4th Trilateral Summit in Istanbul among them. In a joint declaration after the parleys, the three countries reiterated their determination to tackle terrorism in all its forms and importance of enhancing indigenous capacities to that effect."

News Story: Taliban Leaders May Join Afghan Govt.: U.S. - "Dawn" (01/26)

"The commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan said in an interview published on Monday that senior Taliban leaders could join a new government in Kabul. Although U.S. leaders started talking publicly about including the Taliban in a political solution earlier this month, Gen. Stanley McChrystal went a step ahead when he spoke of also accepting senior Taliban leaders in a possible new arrangement."

News Story: Afghanistan Will Take Longer Than Iraq: Petraeus - "The Nation" (01/26)

"The new American-led surge in Afghanistan will take longer to fight the insurgency than a similar injection of force in Iraq three years ago when violence fell sharply within months, the top U.S. General in the region told 'The Times.' General David Petraeus, the head of Central Command, also warned that the fight in Helmand province, Afghanistan, where British and U.S. forces are based, as well other areas, would become even tougher before the situation improved."

News Story: "Blackwater Didn't Train PM's Security Staff: U.S. Embassy - "Express" (01/26)

"The U.S. Mission in Islamabad on Monday clarified that it has imported 3,000 bullet-proof jackets to improve the performance of the NWFP Police which would be handed over to the provincial government within the next 15 days. Talking to the wire service, 'Online', U.S. Embassy spokesperson, Richard Snelsire, said that American trainers, not the Blackwater, had imparted training to Prime Minister's security staff. He added that the news published in a section of the Pakistani media, in which it was claimed that the U.S. Embassy had imported bullet-proof jackets for its own security personnel, is false."

News Story: Pakistan May Be Excluded From Search List - "Dawn" (01/26)

"U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman, chairman of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, and Ambassador Husain Haqqani are expected to announce on Wednesday Pakistan's removal from a list of countries earmarked for additional security."

News Story: Pakistan Rejects Atom Bomb Material Cut-Off Talks - "Daily Times" (01/26)

"Pakistan, citing a "clear and present danger" from its nuclear-armed rival India, ruled out on Monday global negotiations to ban the future production of material to make atomic bombs. Confirming a Reuters report from January 22, Pakistan's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Zamir Akram, said such a treaty would leave Pakistan - the most recent member of the nuclear club - at a permanent disadvantage."

#### TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Obama Aide Also Wants Pakistan To 'Do More' - "Daily Times" (01/26)

"U.S. President Barack Obama's National Security Adviser on Monday called for Pakistan to show greater urgency in the fight against extremism and pledged that Washington was committed for the long haul. Retired General James Jones said Pakistan's role is critical for the region's future, as the U.S. is pouring thousands of troops into Afghanistan to fight Al Qaeda and other militants. 'It is beyond question that the speed with which we're able to achieve our goals in Afghanistan has a relationship with the willingness of Pakistan to take on the fact that safe havens exist in the border region,' Jones said at the Centre for American Progress, a think-tank."

News Story: Taliban Reward Fighter For 'Shooting Down U.S. Drone' - "The News" (01/26)

"The Taliban in North Waziristan on Monday rewarded one of their fighters with a new model car for shooting down the US drone on Sunday evening. Also, government officials in the restive tribal region finally confirmed the downing of the U.S. spy aircraft by the Taliban militants. The militants led by Hafiz Gul Bahadur claimed shooting down the drone in Hamzoni village on Sunday."

News Story: Pak-Afghan-U.S. Flag Meeting Held - "The News" (01/26)

"The monthly tripartite flag meeting of Pakistani, Afghan and U.S. military officials was held on Monday at the Shiraz U.S. base camp in Afghanistan. The meeting, which lasted for two and a half hour, discussed the border security and legal mobility across the border, official sources said."

News Story: Second Line Of Defence In Afghanistan U.S., U.K. Deploy Arabs And Asians - "Pakistan Observer" (01/26)

"The United States and United Kingdom are increasingly employing Arabs and Asians to work as a second-line of defence in Afghanistan through unpublished deals and private recruitment contracts. The U.S. armed forces newspaper, 'Star and Strips' on Monday (January 25) reported that 'security forces men from Bahrain are among 125 troops from the Muslim nations deployed in Helmand province,' Afghanistan."

News Story: Airstrikes Kill 23 Taliban in Bajaur, Kurram - "Daily Times" (01/26)

"Security forces on Monday backed by fighter jets and helicopter gunships targeted Taliban strongholds across the country's northwest, killing 23 terrorists in the Kurram and Bajaur agencies, according to sources."

News Story: Karzai Wants Taliban Off UN Blacklist - "Dawn" (01/26)

"Afghan President Hamid Karzai said on Monday he would press for Taliban names to be removed from a UN blacklist, as he sought support for his country in talks with the leaders of Pakistan and Turkey."

News Story: UN Seeks To Drop Some Taliban Leaders - "The Nation" (01/26)

"As the United Nations Organisation seeks to drop some Taliban leaders from terrorists list, sources said Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil, Abdul Salim Zaeef and Gulbadeen Hikmatyar were among those expected to be cleared, well-informed diplomatic sources told 'The Nation' on Monday."

News Story: Malik Again Says No To Talks With Terrorists - "Daily Times" (01/26)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Monday said that terrorists' plans to destabilize the country had been foiled with successful military operations. Talking to journalists in Peshawar he said there will be no talks with terrorists. The government will launch operation against them wherever they will be found in the country."

## POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: London Conference Tomorrow; Stakeholders Realise Role For Good Taliban In Future Set-Up - "The News" (01/26)

"As preparations for Wednesday's London conference on Afghanistan gain momentum, authoritative voices are ensuring that a role for the Taliban in a future political set-up is ensured, as there is a full realization now that only a 'military surge' will not deliver at a time when the Taliban are heady with power. As negotiations continue with the Taliban, sources in Kabul say this is one reason that polls have been delayed inside Afghanistan. Recently, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defence Secretary Robert Gates, during their visits to Pakistan, had envisaged a role for 'reformed' or 'good' Taliban, who were willing to enter the democratic process, abide by the Afghan constitution and accept the Karzai government."

News Story: Pakistan Acts To Counter Indian Influence In Afghanistan - "Daily Times" (01/26)

"Pakistan has successfully mobilized the defunct six-plus-two talks formula to counter the U.S. pressure regarding giving India a 'greater role' in war-torn Afghanistan's rehabilitation."

Afghanistan's immediate neighbors - Pakistan, Iran, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as the U.S., are meeting today (Tuesday) in Turkey to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and to take stock of measures for the restoration of peace in the country."

News Story: Protesting Cops Paralyze Life In Quetta - "The News" (01/26)

"Life was paralyzed in the provincial capital on Monday when hundreds of policemen staged a sit-in outside the Chief Minister Secretariat, demanding of the government to accept their demands, including hike in salaries. Reports of similar demonstrations by policemen were also received from other districts of the province. The protesters in Quetta blocked important roads and highways and burnt tyres. There were some reports about aerial firing in some localities of the city."

#### ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: UN-Govt. Row May Disrupt Aid Plan - "Dawn" (01/26)

"Wrangling between the government and the United Nations over a \$500 million aid plan may adversely affect the flow of humanitarian aid for 1.2 million displaced people in the NWFP and FATA. The government's consent for the UN's 'Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan (PHRP) 2010' has been held up because of differences between the two over transparency and operational matters."

News Story: Qureshi in Dubai For FoDP Meeting - "The News" (01/26)

"The Foreign Minister arrived in Dubai on Monday for participation in the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) moot to be held there on Tuesday (today).... Meanwhile the foreign Office spokesperson Abdul Basit expressing his optimism over the success of Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) meeting said Pakistan would invite investors of Corporate and Private Sectors to visit Pakistan." News Story: Donors Slow In Releasing Project Aid - "The News" (01/26)

"Slow disbursement (up to only 25 per cent) of project aid from multilateral and bilateral donors has hampered work on the foreign-funded development projects in the areas of power sector and earthquake reconstruction during the current fiscal year, official documents available with 'The News' reveal."

News Story: Pak To Enrich Uranium For Nuclear Power Plants - "Pakistan Observer" (01/26)

"The government has decided to enrich uranium for use of existing and future nuclear power plants and to this effect Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) that met here recently accorded approval to Nuclear Fuel Enrichment Plant Project at a cost of Rs 14.247 billion, a senior official at PAEC (Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission) told 'Pakistan Observer.'"

News Story: Govt. To Reduce Uplift Budget By 30pc - "Dawn" (01/26)

"The government has decided to reduce the current year's development budget by another 30 per cent to about Rs300 billion because of additional expenditure on security and power sector subsidies. Sources said the ministry of finance had conveyed to the Planning Commission and the ministries concerned. The issue is likely to be taken up by the Federal Cabinet on Wednesday."

#### EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Turnaround on Taliban, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/26)

"While the U.S. and U.K. are evolving strategies to talk to the Taliban in Afghanistan, the top UN Envoy in Afghanistan has urged Afghan officials to seek removal of senior Taliban leaders from the UN terror list; and the U.S. to review the detention of 750 Bagram prisoners - a major grievance of the Taliban. So is the ground being prepared for a U.S.-Taliban dialogue and will Pakistan once again be left with the destructive remains of a failed U.S. policy?"

Editorial: NATO Commander's Suggestion Of Talks With The Taliban: This Is The Best Time To Withdraw U.S Troops From The Region, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/26)

"NATO Commander in Afghanistan Gen. Stanley McChrystal has stressed on the need for peace talks with the Afghan Taliban for peace in the region.... If the U.S. itself is running away from this war and coming towards talks with the Taliban, what is stopping us from doing the same?... If the tribesmen can shoot down a drone, our Air Force has the full capability of doing the same."

Editorial: The Social Cost Of War Against Militancy, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/26)

"Terrorist attacks have traumatized the whole nation. The psychological impact of bomb blasts and the killing of relatives and friends leaves a deep imprint, particularly on children's minds, which they will carry with them for years to come. The incidents cause physical, emotional disruptions, commonly referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder and its treatment, often spread over years, is highly costly. Pakistan can ill afford such a situation. In the case of the U.S., which has conducted wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan, the problem involves only a few thousand veterans. In our case, those affected include both civilians and military personnel. Unless treated properly, thousands of people with personality disorders, developed during the ongoing war on militancy, will continue to pose a threat to themselves, their families and the rest of society. Unless there is widespread awareness about the problem, this could pose a danger to society."

Editorial: The Need To Resolve Indo-Pak Disputes Through Talks, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/26)

"U.S. Defense Secretary has added to his complicated statements by saying that that neither India nor Pakistan consider mediation [in bilateral disputes] acceptable.... This means that Pakistani leaders' repeated statements urging the U.S. to mediate in resolving Indo-Pak disputes actually have no value in America's eyes....

Indian sincerity and interest in the matter can also be gauged from the fact that instead of holding talks to improve the climate, they are insisting [on Pakistan] to improve the situation before talks are held.... The fact is that every year, India and Pakistan buy arms worth billions from the U.S. and other developed countries. Hence, mediation followed by a substantial improvement in [Indo-Pak] ties would translate into a loss for [western] weapon factories.... It is India and Pakistan's responsibility to focus on resolving their disputes, decrease reliance on developed countries and divert money from buying arms to public welfare."

Editorial: Increase In India's Water Aggression, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/26)

"Pakistan's agriculture is threatened with severe losses due to India's theft of 50 thousand cusec water from Pakistan's important river Chenab through pumps.... Already the waters of rivers Jhelum and Indus are being misappropriated [by India].... In the face of this increasing water aggression by India, the attitude of Pakistani Indus Water Commissioner is apologetic and criminal. He resorts to knocking on IMF and World Bank doors whenever domestic pressure increases. However, as these two donors have invested in India's illegal dams - Baglihar, Wullar, and Kishen Ganga -- they will neither support Pakistan, nor decide in its favor, fearing loss of their investment. In the present circumstances, there is no need to be cordial with India."

Editorial: Israeli Intransigence, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/26)

"While there is not much new in Sunday's declaration by the Israeli prime minister that his country will retain - read annex - parts of the West Bank, what is striking is the categorical tone that was adopted. With America's special envoy George Mitchell in Israel,

Benjamin Netanyahu said words that deserve to be quoted for their hubris: Our message is clear. We are planting here, we will stay here, we will build here.... What is shocking, however, is the American administration's surrender to the powerful Israel lobby in America, notwithstanding President Barack Obama's declaration in his June 4 speech to the Muslim world that settlement activity must come to a halt."

Opinion: Obama's Changing Tone, an op-ed by Shahid Javed Burki in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/26)

"A good part of the debate in the US as President Barack Obama was deciding on a strategy to fight the Islamic militants operating in the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan was concerned with giving more weight to economic development in winning the war against the extremists. If economic deprivation was a powerful reason for the extremists to fight the West and simultaneously the Afghan and Pakistani states then that is where the bulk of the effort has to go."

Opinion: Could The Taliban Reconcile With Kabul?, Opinion: an op-ed by Rahimullah Yusufzai in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/26)

"All who matter in Afghanistan are talking about reconciliation with the Taliban, but on the Afghan government's terms. Strangely enough, though, the offers of peace talks are being made at a time when 37,000 fresh U.S. and NATO troops are on their way to the country in a desperate attempt to bring the conflict to a military end. This is a turnaround from statements from Western capitals in the past that the Taliban are terrorists and not worthy of being engaged in political talks or reconciliation.... On the other hand, the Taliban, who won't give up the fight easily after their sustained resistance against a formidable enemy for so long, demand that all foreign forces withdraw from Afghanistan and without any agreement on the country's future and its system of government. So it would be naive to assume that the Taliban would cut a deal with the U.S. and its partners under pressure from Pakistan on terms that are more favorable to Islamabad than to their leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.... Pakistan will have to be careful not to argue the cause of the Afghan Taliban to such an extent that it leads to the strengthening of the Pakistani Taliban, because the links between these two militant groups cannot be broken easily. It is ironic that the West is keen to promote reconciliation and political dialogue with the Afghan Taliban while insisting on the military defeat of the Pakistani Taliban."

Opinion: The Real Problem In Afghanistan, an op-ed by Mohammad Jamil in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/26)

"The U.S. and the West already blame Pakistan for all their 'woes' in Afghanistan whereas in fact the U.S., NATO and Afghan forces with all the arsenal and the best machine at their disposal have not been able to control more than 40 per cent of Afghanistan.... The problem is that the international community has been found wanting in delivering on its promises to the post-Taliban Afghanistan. It failed to disarm militias and the country remained awash with illegal weapons.... The Yemen meeting will be followed on Thursday by a bigger, higher-level conference to which 68 countries have been invited and which will be attended by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The talks will focus on how to tackle extremism in Yemen and how to stabilize Afghanistan through political as well as military means. But this is an exercise in futility, as things in Afghanistan can only improve when the U.S. and the West address Pakistan's concerns, otherwise they can never win the war or bring peace at least in Afghanistan."

Opinion: U.S. And Pakistan, Strange Allies, an op-ed by Dr. Huma Mir in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/26)

"Despite having suffered the most due to the U.S. adventure in Afghanistan, Pakistan today remains the most vibrant and loyal U.S. ally.... U.S. has been persistently demanding from Pakistan to shun its traditional threat perception and shift additional troops from

Indo Pak border to the Afghan border to battle the Taliban extremists in North Waziristan. The U.S. wants to use Pakistani forces as bait, U.S. planners visualize that Pakistani action in North Waziristan could draw Taliban fighters from Afghanistan thus relieving the pressure there on U.S. and NATO forces while Pakistan executes its dirty work.... Will the Pakistani assault provide any relief to the Western Forces in Afghanistan or will it confirm the Pakistani viewpoint that the Afghan problem needs an Afghan solution. Demonizing Pakistan won't win the war for the Western Forces in Afghanistan."

Opinion: A Culture Of Militancy, an op-ed by Mazhar Abbas in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/26)

"From the bustling, congested markets of Karachi, where violence is endemic in all its myriad forms, to Peshawar and Quetta, videos and audio messages of 'martyrs', and sermons and statements that glorify terrorism as jihad have been sold freely for decades. These have come to be a sad source of inspiration for the youth and have promoted the hate culture that has gripped our society today.... As the government strives towards strengthening the tenets of secular education and boosting social welfare policies, the sale of hate material must be made a punishable act."

Opinion: FMCT And Strategic Stability, an op-ed by Dr. Maleeha Lodhi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/26)

"Pakistan's present position on the negotiating process stems from the concern that, as currently envisaged, the proposed treaty could upset the strategic equilibrium in the region by limiting its deterrent capability at a time when India has been offered other means to escape a similar cap on the size of its nuclear arsenal. Two developments, in particular, have changed Pakistan's threat perceptions, and they have a bearing on its position on the FMCT. The first is the Indo-U.S. civilian nuclear agreement and the consequent NSG waiver that has allowed India to conclude agreements with countries, including Russia and France, to supply it with nuclear fuel.... Together with the NSG exemption, this places India in a position to increase its fissile material stocks qualitatively and quantitatively. It will be able to divert, if it wants to, most of its indigenous stocks to its weapons program.... The FMCT negotiations still have many issues to iron out, including the scope of the treaty, definition of fissile material and verification procedures. But for substantive progress the process will require getting Pakistan on board in a forum that works on the principle of consensus. This will depend on how Pakistan's principal concern can be addressed: that the treaty should not become a vehicle to constrain its strategic deterrence capability and leave it in a position of permanent disadvantage to India."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Patterson